

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

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FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIXTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 20 March 1969, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. G. IGNATIEFF

(Canada)

GE.69-6374

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil

Mr. S.A. FRAZAO
Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA
Mr. P.C. de MELLO
Mr. L.F. PALMEIRA LAMPREIA

Bulgaria

Mr. K. CHRISTOV
Mr. M. KARASSIMEONOV
Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV
Mr. I. PEINIRDJIEV

Burma:

U CHIT MYAING
U KYAW MIN

Canada:

Mr. G. IGNATIEFF
Mr. A.G. CAMPBELL
Mr. J.R. MORDEN

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. T. LAHODA
Mr. V. SAFAR
Mr. J. STRUCKA

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE

India:

Mr. M.A. HUSAIN
Mr. N. KRISHNAN
Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. R. CARACCIOLO
Mr. F. L. OTTIERI
Mr. R. BORSARELLI
Mr. U. PESTALOZZA

Mexico:

Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES
Mr. M. TELLO MACIAS
Mr. H. CARDENAS RODRIGUEZ

Nigeria:

Alhaji SULE KOLO
Mr. C.O. HOLLIST
Mr. L.A. MALIKI

Poland:

Mr. H. JAROSZEK
Mr. K. ZYBYLSKI
Mr. H. STEPOSZ
Mr. R. WLAZLO

Romania:

Mr. N. ECOBESCO
Mr. V. TARZIORU
Mr. C. GEORGESCO
Mr. C. MITRAN

Sweden:

Mr. A. EDELSTAM
Mr. R. BOMAN

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
Mr. O.A. GRINEVSKY
Mr. I.I. TCHEPROV
Mr. N.S. KISHILOV

United Arab Republic:

Mr. H. KHALLAF
Mr. O. SIRRY
Mr. M. ISMAIL

United Kingdom:

Mr. I.F. PORTER
Mr. W.N. HILLIER-FRY
Mr. M.E. HOWELL

United States of America:

Mr. G.C. SMITH
Mr. C. GLEYSTEN
Mr. L.D. WEILER
Mr. W. GIVAN

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Canada): I declare open the 396th plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.
2. Alhaji SULE KOLO (Nigeria): I should like first of all to take this opportunity to welcome in our midst our new colleagues, Ambassador Smith of the United States, Ambassador Ignatieff of Canada and Ambassador Frazão of Brazil. I should also like to welcome our colleague, Ambassador García Robles of Mexico, who has joined us once again. In welcoming them may I also, on behalf of the Nigerian delegation, assure them of our full co-operation?
3. This session is, to some extent, of special significance. Having recently concluded a treaty which we are gratified to note has received the overwhelming support of the United Nations General Assembly (resolution 2373 (XXII)); we are confronted with a number of new and equally important subjects related to our mandate to draft treaties, conventions or protocols leading to general and complete disarmament. I have used the word "new" in this context only in the sense that in the past we have concentrated much of our efforts on the drafting of a nuclear non-proliferation treaty. In fact, the non-proliferation Treaty itself cannot be entirely isolated from other disarmament measures. Indeed, article VI of the Treaty demands that the nuclear Powers should -

"... pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament ..."
4. In view of that undertaking, which many non-nuclear States regard as the most important contribution by the nuclear Powers, to a treaty which deals primarily with what a Swiss newspaper once referred to as "the disarming of the non-armed", it was rather disheartening when neither of the two major nuclear Powers, which hold the co-Chairmanship of this Committee, could ratify the Treaty promptly. We are glad to learn, however, that in spite of the difficulties, the United States Congress has now ratified the Treaty. We congratulate the Government of the United States, and hope that the Soviet Union will also ratify the Treaty in due course and thus give the lead that is so necessary for its wider acceptance and ratification.
5. In this connexion may I refer briefly to the yet unfulfilled hope of bilateral negotiations between the Governments of the United States of America and the Soviet Union on the limitation of offensive strategic nuclear weapons delivery systems and

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systems of defence against ballistic missiles? The announcement of the willingness of the two Powers to engage in such bilateral negotiations was greeted with relief by the whole world, and in particular by us in this Committee. It is a pity that the negotiations have so far not commenced. We hope, however, that the political and other factors that have inhibited the negotiations will soon be resolved. The early commencement of the negotiations will not only constitute an earnest of the desire of the two super-Powers to complement the provisions of the non-proliferation Treaty, but will also serve as an incentive for the wider acceptance of the Treaty.

6. One more point about the Treaty concerns the interpretation of article III. It is our view that the article is intended as an incentive to non-nuclear States to ratify the Treaty. If this view is correct, then it is essential that the provision of fissionable materials for peaceful uses to non-nuclear Powers be restricted to those which accept Treaty obligations, particularly in regard to the international inspection of their atomic activities.

7. Nevertheless, we believe that this our present session should be forward-looking. At the beginning of my statement I made reference to the successful conclusion of a draft treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons by the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament. In spite of this achievement, I would venture to suggest that there is no room for complacency. It is for that reason that we welcome the initiative of the Soviet Union in presenting at our first meeting this session a draft treaty on prohibition of the use for military purposes of the sea-bed (ENDC/240). My Government is studying the draft, and the Nigerian delegation will comment on the proposals in due course.

8. Members of the Committee will recall that at the last session of the United Nations General Assembly the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament came under sharp criticism. Our method of work was considered ineffectual, and our report to the United Nations was criticized for its seeming lack of substance. In fact, it was even suggested that a new committee be established to take over some of the functions of the Committee, no doubt because the sponsors of such a proposal felt that some other body might be able to undertake the task more efficiently. The Nigerian delegation very clearly stated its views about this proposal in the First Committee at the twenty-third session of the General Assembly. We do not believe

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that the establishment of a new body could radically improve the present situation; we also have doubts about the advantage to be gained by enlarging the present Committee. The problem, we feel, lies in our method of work. As long as we continue to devote all our meetings to formal statements, our progress will remain slow and unconvincing. I believe that in one of his interventions the Rt. Hon. Fred Mulley referred to this subject (ENDC/PV.381, paras. 59 et seq.; PV.387, paras. 3, 41). We think that his suggestions deserve our serious and early consideration.

9. I now turn to our programme of work for this session.

10. Whilst complete and general disarmament is our ultimate objective we are, I believe, all agreed that the immediate and urgent need is for nuclear disarmament. Having negotiated the non-proliferation Treaty, the next priority within the context of nuclear disarmament is, in the view of the Nigerian delegation, to endeavour to curb the nuclear arms race. As I have mentioned earlier, article VI of the Treaty enjoins each signatory to pursue "at an early date" measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race.

11. I am convinced that the aim of the article is not merely to summarize the further action required of us but also to indicate the order of priority. It is therefore significant not only that the question of cessation of the nuclear arms race comes first in the list of subjects to be negotiated, but that it is only in relation to that subject that the phrase "at an early date" is used. In any case, whether or not it is agreed that article VI of the non-proliferation Treaty outlines the order of priority of disarmament subjects, we would wish to recommend to this Committee that it adopt an order of priority similar to the order of subjects listed in that article -- that is:

1. cessation of the nuclear arms race; 2. nuclear disarmament; 3. chemical and biological warfare and peaceful uses of the sea-bed; and 4. general and complete disarmament. Those are, at best, broad outlines, and within each category of subjects there are, of course, subdivisions which must also be tackled in order of priority.

12. The cessation of the nuclear arms race entails different stages of negotiations; and Nigeria believes that the first stage is to ensure that more sophisticated nuclear weapons are not developed. As long as underground nuclear tests continue, the door remains open for the development of more devastating nuclear weapons; and not even quantitative control of the production of fissionable or nuclear weapons can by itself

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eliminate that danger. In other words, the prerequisite for an effective cessation of the nuclear arms race is the elimination of the possibilities of the development of more sophisticated weapons; and this can best be assured by a comprehensive test ban. This should be followed by an agreement to stop the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes, and another to prevent the diversion and conversion of existing stocks.

13. Following from what I have said, my delegation recommends that the first item on our agenda at this session should be the elaboration of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. I am well aware, of course, of the difficulties that have arisen on this subject over the question of verification; but I am also fully convinced that we cannot make any appreciable progress towards nuclear disarmament if we do not find a way of surmounting the obstacles to banning underground tests.

14. It was heartening to learn during our last session that considerable progress had been made in the field of long-range seismic identification. The experts themselves, however, admitted that there was a wide range of man-made explosions which could not yet be identified as such or differentiated from earthquakes. The implication of this gap in the effectiveness of a long-range seismic identification system is that the system alone cannot form an acceptable basis for negotiating a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We are therefore faced with an alternative: either (a) we suspend negotiating a comprehensive test-ban treaty until a foolproof seismic identification system is evolved -- which may take years; or (b) we negotiate a treaty which supplements long-range seismic identification with some other form of verification below the identification threshold. As I have said, the nuclear arms race constitutes a serious and real threat to the whole world. We cannot afford to remain inactive until the long-range seismic identification system is perfected. That will be too dangerous. We must act now even if what we do can be accepted only as a temporary measure.

15. In a speech to the First Committee at the twenty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly, Ambassador Foster, representing the United States, said:

"The United States proposes that some underground nuclear explosions be conducted with the collateral objective that these serve as explosions for worldwide seismic investigations." (A/C.1/PV.1630, p. 18-20)

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16. It is our understanding that this experiment would not involve the developing or testing of nuclear weapons, and that all interested States willing and able to participate in the collection and evaluation of the seismic data obtained from the experiment would be free to do so. Furthermore, the results of this experiment would, we understand, be published. We wish to congratulate the United States on making this offer, and hope to hear from the United States delegation during our present session something about the progress made in this regard. We are convinced that such action as is proposed by the United States would be a further step on the path paved by the meetings of the Seismic Study Group of the International Institute for Peace and Conflict Research held last year in Sweden.

17. In spite of the rather discouraging conclusion that explosive yields in regions as high as several tens of thousands of tons of TNT can escape detection using the present long-range seismic identification system, we must persevere. The dangers inherent in nuclear warfare make it necessary for some form of action to be taken. It is for that reason that we would strongly urge this Committee to take up the proposal of the United Kingdom contained in its working paper (ENDC/232) submitted to us on 20 August 1968. Part of the proposal for experimental nuclear explosions is met by the United States proposal which I mentioned earlier; and the quota system -- or what one might term the phasing-out system -- is in line with the need to act now, even if, as I stated earlier, the steps taken are only interim in nature. I believe that there are some reservations about on-site inspections; but we are convinced that this issue can be overcome. My delegation intends to put forward certain proposals about this during the current session.

18. I would suggest that in order to lend our discussions a definite sense of direction and purpose we introduce, as in the case of our negotiations on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a draft treaty to form the basis of our discussion. This would not only concretize our discussion but enable us to pin-point the conceptual and practical divergencies. A sub-committee, to include those countries which, like Sweden and the United Kingdom, have shown considerable interest in and made a very valuable contribution to this subject, could be charged with the responsibility for producing the first draft.

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19. In outlining Nigeria's views regarding priorities I am not unmindful of the urgency which the USSR has placed on negotiating a treaty to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons, or that which the United Kingdom has placed on the elaboration of a treaty to ban micro-biological warfare. Those are indeed important aspects of disarmament which my delegation is willing to support. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are as pressing or urgent as the cessation of the nuclear arms race. To accord the highest priority to the question of prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons seems logical; but so long as the weapons remain in the arsenals of the nuclear Powers, the possibility of a mistake that might lead to a nuclear war will exist. The truth is that, prohibition or no prohibition, as long as some Powers have nuclear weapons in their arsenals they will use them if and when they deem it to be in their interest to do so. That obvious fact gives further support to Nigeria's view that the most urgent step is to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty, and to stop the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes.
20. With regard to micro-biological warfare it has been said that no one has ever used it. I admit that the earlier the matter is tackled the greater the chances of early agreement. I submit, however, that the subject is not as pressing as nuclear disarmament. In any case, the last session of the General Assembly charged the United Nations Secretary-General with the responsibility for preparing a report on the subject (resolution 2454 A (XXIII); ENDC/237); and I think that our discussions might be more fruitful if we awaited the conclusion of that report.
21. Finally, I should like to include in my welcome Ambassador Klusák of Czechoslovakia who is replacing Ambassador Winkler, and to extend to him the co-operation of my delegation in our work here.
22. Mr. PORTER (United Kingdom): I should like to welcome those representatives who are attending their first Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament session -- you, Mr. Chairman; Ambassador Smith, our new United States co-Chairman; Ambassador Frazão of Brazil; and the leader of the Czechoslovak delegation, Ambassador Klusák, who will be joining us next week. It is also a pleasure to see back with us colleagues from previous sessions, including the Soviet co-Chairman, Ambassador Roshchin; Mr. Protitch, Mr. Epstein and, after an interval of more than a year, Ambassador García Robles.

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23. It is now widely recognized, I think, that article VI of the non-proliferation Treaty (General Assembly resolution 2373/XXII) provides an organic link between our activities over the past few years and the further measures of disarmament and arms control which we shall tackle at this session. The representative of Nigeria has just referred forcibly to this point. It is satisfactory, therefore, to be able to note that since the Committee last met, progress has been made towards bringing the Treaty into force. It has now been signed by nearly ninety States; and of the countries represented here Canada, Mexico, Nigeria and the United Kingdom have ratified. There have been ten ratifications in all. We welcome particularly the recent decision of the United States Senate; for United States ratification will in itself be an important step towards bringing the Treaty into force.

24. However, to be fully effective the non-proliferation Treaty requires worldwide adherence, including that of States advanced in nuclear technology. In this connexion we welcome the most recent signature by a member of this Committee -- that of the Italian Government on 23 January. But, to endure, the Treaty requires more than this: it requires the faithful observance of all its obligations, including those set out in article VI. We have always attached the greatest importance to the link between the Treaty and further measures of disarmament; and, as the Committee will recall, the purpose of our amendments to the draft treaty last year was to strengthen this link. For us article VI is the point of departure in our approach to disarmament negotiations in the post-non-proliferation-Treaty era.

25. My delegation heard with pleasure the reference in President Nixon's letter to Ambassador Smith (ENDC/239*) to the talks which could take place between the United States and the Soviet Union on the limitation of strategic arms. These talks could in themselves constitute an important implementation of article VI of the Treaty. We believe that they would promote the climate of confidence between the United States and the Soviet Union which is essential to success in achieving further measures of arms control. We believe that a basis and a compelling reason for them exist. Our own ratification of the non-proliferation Treaty was made in the conviction that there is a pressing need for disarmament,

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especially measures of nuclear disarmament. Therefore we again urge both countries to enter into talks as soon as possible with that aim in view; and we look forward to their moving towards an understanding on this vital issue.

26. Meanwhile, we have a full agenda of work in this Committee which was agreed during our last session (ENDC/236, p.3). Our own priority in the nuclear field is for a ban on underground tests, to complement the partial test-ban Treaty (ENDC/100/Rev.1); and this priority is shared by many other delegations, including the signatories of the joint memorandum (ENDC/235) of 26 August last. The prohibition of testing in the atmosphere was important on grounds of public health as well as of arms control; but the prohibition of underground testing would be almost exclusively an arms-control measure. The countries mainly concerned have to decide whether to take a step which will be critical for the further development and sophistication of their nuclear weapons; and this decision must be taken in a wider context than that of the technical issues involved.

27. One of the main difficulties has of course been connected with verification. The SIPRI report (ENDC/230), a summary of which was introduced into the Committee by the representative of Sweden last August (ENDC/PV.385, paras.6-10) has shown that explosions above a certain yield can be positively identified by seismic means. Experts are agreed on that point. They also agreed that an area of uncertainty exists in the lower yield ranges. There is scope therefore for further work. A useful initiative was taken by the United States in the First Committee of the United Nations on 5 December last (A/C.1/PV.1630, p.18-20) when it proposed to conduct underground nuclear explosions with the collateral objective that they should be used for world-wide seismic investigations: these investigations could go a long way to establish the capabilities of the present network. The United Kingdom will collaborate in these experiments, and hopes to be joined by all other countries in a position to do so.

28. A continuation of discussions on the lines of the SIPRI report and of results from the United States test investigations will serve to establish in more detail the measure of agreement that exists on the possibilities of verification by seismic means. The Soviet delegation maintains that national means of detection are sufficient for the control of a test ban; and since in this discussion it is essential for us all to speak the same language, it would be useful if the Soviet delegation could at some stage

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explain in greater detail what it means by this term. If it refers only to seismic detection, it would be useful to know whether the national seismic readings would be interpreted nationally; or whether they would be supplied to an international centre for collation and assessment; or whether they would be exchanged directly between countries.

29. We favour the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban as soon as generally-acceptable terms can be agreed; and it was to this end that we made our suggestion last year for a phased approach (ENDC/232, para.6). This, the Committee will recall - and my Nigerian colleague has just referred to it - would start with an agreed annual quota of underground explosions to be reduced within a few years to zero. The reduction would put an increasingly powerful brake on the development of new or improved nuclear weapon systems, and would finally bring the process to a complete halt. It is in our view a procedure worth serious consideration. A point of negotiation might well be reached at which the nuclear Powers would feel able to undertake to end tests on a descending scale over a few years while they would not at that stage be able to agree to a complete halt immediately.

30. I turn now to the non-nuclear field. The United Kingdom delegation proposed last year a measure (ENDC/PV.387; ENDC/231*) relating to chemical and biological weapons which could, in its view, constitute an important step in the direction of general and complete disarmament. The need for urgent action was stressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the introduction to his last annual report when he spoke of chemical and biological weapons as an "area of multiplying dangers and of diminishing public appreciation of them" (A/7201/Add.1, para.32); and he reminded us of this in his message last Tuesday (ENDC/PV.395, para.4).

31. Because biological warfare is still in a relatively early stage of development, and because there is still time to stop a full-scale biological arms race, the United Kingdom delegation proposed at our last session that the Committee should address itself to the prohibition of biological weapons while an expert study on chemical weapons was being carried out. However, as the majority favoured a study of both chemical and biological weapons, we co-sponsored the draft resolution which became General Assembly resolution 2454 A (XXIII) asking for such a study. The experts appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations have already got under way: their report, which we look forward to examining here before the next session of the

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General Assembly, should be a valuable technical contribution to our work in this Committee. Meanwhile, I hope that we here will be able to make a start on some of the arms-control aspects of the problem. These are, after all, the responsibility of this Committee.

32. Our objective must remain as stated in resolution 2162 B (XXI):

"...an agreement on the cessation of the development and production of chemical and bacteriological weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and on the elimination of all such weapons from national arsenals."

33. In our view the best way to make progress towards that objective is to concentrate in the first instance on the banning of the production, possession and use of biological weapons. We therefore look forward to hearing the views of other delegations on the ideas we advanced last summer. We shall, of course, be very ready to consider ideas which any other member of the Committee may advance.

34. We appreciate the sentiments of those representatives who maintain that both chemical and biological weapons should be banned at the same time. We in the United Kingdom delegation would like to see the prohibition of both kinds of weapons; but, as my Minister, Mr. Mulley, has made clear on several occasions, we must make a realistic assessment of the obstacles to the simultaneous achievement of these goals. The way to prohibition of biological weapons seems less difficult than the way to prohibition of chemical weapons; and we prefer to try first for that which is the more easily realizable rather than to risk losing them both. We hope members of the Committee will not be put off by the problem of defining these two types of weapons. The definitions should be provided by the report of the experts; and in the meantime we can consider how biological weapons, as that term is generally understood, can be made subject to arms-control measures.

35. As was explained in our working paper of last August, our aim is the early conclusion of a new convention prohibiting biological methods of warfare, which would supplement but not supersede the Geneva Protocol of 1925. Our legal advice is that it is perfectly feasible to draft a convention which would not invalidate or weaken in any way the 1925 Protocol; indeed, re-affirmation of that Protocol could be held to strengthen it, and signature of the new convention could denote endorsement of the 1925 Protocol. The new convention would go further than the 1925 Protocol in covering all weapons now understood by the word "biological" and in prohibiting absolutely not only their use but also their production and possession.

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36. It has been suggested by the representative of Sweden that there might be a joint collective statement in the General Assembly or elsewhere which would enable States to register adherence to a ban on all chemical and biological means of warfare. We do not think it would be possible to obtain general international support for such a move; hence, as I have already explained, the step-by-step approach which we ourselves are advocating. In any case, we believe that new international commitments to bring the Geneva Protocol up to date should be in the form of an international agreement which would be formally signed and ratified by countries subscribing to it.

37. President Nixon and Chairman Kosygin referred in their messages (ENDC/239* ENDC/238) to the importance of keeping the sea-bed free from the arms race; and the Soviet representative has submitted a draft treaty on this question (ENDC/240). There is a wide measure of international agreement that the sea-bed should be reserved for peaceful purposes; and, in view of our responsibility to the international community for the conduct of arms-control negotiations, it is certainly for us here to examine the implications of that principle.

38. We in the United Kingdom are studying both the Soviet draft treaty and President Nixon's letter very carefully. Our provisional view is that the Soviet draft treaty goes too far, particularly in what it seeks to ban from the sea-bed in article 1. On the other hand, we strongly share the views expressed by President Nixon in his letter and would certainly wish to co-operate in working out an international agreement to prohibit the emplacement or fixing of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed.

39. My Government's ultimate objective remains, of course, general and complete disarmament based on the principles agreed in 1961 by the United States and the Soviet Union (ENDC/5). We recognize that this far-reaching objective will not be achieved in the near future; that meanwhile we must work for agreement on more limited measures. We are encouraged by what has already been achieved, which covers, as the representative of Sweden has pointed out, a number of nuclear measures included in the United States and Soviet plans for general and complete disarmament of 1962 (ENDC/30 and Add.1, 2, 3; ENDC/2/Rev.1 and Add.1; ENDC/40 and Rev.1).

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40. Nevertheless we must look at these individual measures of disarmament against the background of our over-all objective and ensure that they fit into the general pattern of disarmament and security. We are concerned that the nuclear-weapon States should be seen to be carrying out the undertaking under article VI of the non-proliferation Treaty, which was -

"... to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

41. When we next go to the General Assembly nearly eighteen months will have passed since the Assembly approved the non-proliferation Treaty. By then we must have some results to show for our work here. My delegation is convinced that the Eighteen-Nation Committee is the body best qualified to carry out the patient, persistent and detailed work of disarmament negotiations; and we fully endorse the remarks to that effect made by the representative of Ethiopia in the First Committee on 21 November last (A/C.1/PV.1615, p.23). We shall have to concentrate on the essentials, the possibles, the practicalities of our work if we are to take to the General Assembly the results expected of us.

42. The CHAIRMAN (Canada): Since no other representative wishes to make a statement at this time I should like, with the indulgence of the Committee, to speak in my capacity as representative of Canada.

43. Since this is my first formal statement here, perhaps I may be permitted to say a personal word or two to express the deep satisfaction I feel at sitting here flanked by two friends of about twenty-four years' standing, Dragoslav Protitch and William Epstein. Through an oversight at our last meeting I failed to express greetings to my new colleague the Ambassador of Czechoslovakia. Milan Kulsák and I served as Vice-Chairmen of the Committee of Thirty-Three on peace-keeping; and I think that at that time the first notable advance was registered in the direction of general agreement; I hope that this will be a happy augury for our collaboration in this body.

(The Chairman, Canada)

44. I should also like to express my gratitude to the representatives of Nigeria and the United Kingdom for their words of welcome today.

45. It seems a long time since those far-off days following the Second World War when I attended the first post-war conference on disarmament in New York to hear the United States, through Mr. Baruch, make the imaginative and far-sighted offer of putting an end to nuclear weapons if others would accept an international monopoly and control over all the peaceful uses and development of nuclear energy. That great opportunity for peace was let slip.

46. Since then, twenty-four years have gone by and the arms race, in the meantime, far from halting has gathered momentum year by year. The Secretary-General's message to us at the opening meeting (ENDC/PV.395, para.4), as well as the remarkably interesting and informative statement of my friend the representative of Mexico (ibid., paras.27 et seq.), contained the statistical evidence that global military expenditures, far from falling, have been rising and indeed have reached new record-high levels.

47. If the purpose, then, of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament is to achieve by agreement the gradual reduction of the level of armaments, then little advance to the attainment of that purpose seems so far to have been achieved. Yet the messages of the President of the United States and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, the two countries with the highest level of armaments, at the opening of this stage of our discussions give us, I believe, some new grounds for hope.

48. Being located geographically between those two leading military Powers, Canada naturally has a special stake in what is done about disarmament. It is natural, therefore, that Canada attaches the highest importance to progress in the work of this Committee.

49. The year 1968 marked some progress in the disarmament field when the non-proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226*) was negotiated and recommended by this body to the United Nations General Assembly, which in turn confirmed it by an overwhelming vote (resolution 2373 (XXII)). That development, in our view, if followed up with determination may have given us in this Committee another chance: another chance in the eyes of the critics of the performance of this body, especially in the United Nations General Assembly. The representative of Nigeria made effective reference to that criticism in his statement today.

(The Chairman, Canada)

50. The Canadian delegation is pleased to draw attention to the fact that on 8 January last Canada deposited instruments of ratification of the non-proliferation Treaty in London, Moscow and Washington. The Canadian Government was the fifth to complete that action. It is a source of satisfaction to us that additional ratifications have since been deposited and that others are to be expected in the immediate future. We echo the words of welcome already expressed for the action in this direction which has now almost been completed by the United States. It is our hope that the Soviet Union will in the near future proceed with ratification and that sufficient other ratifications will shortly be deposited, in order that the Treaty may enter into force.

51. We consider it desirable for all States to sign and ratify the Treaty, so that it may become of universal application. The sooner it comes into effect and the larger the number of the States to which it applies, the greater will be the pressure on those now withholding signature and ratification to take the necessary steps. We believe that all possible influence should be used to persuade governments which have hitherto stood aside. For we recognize, as the former United States Secretary of Defense, Mr. Robert McNamara, puts it in his book The Essence of Security:

"The most profound problem the non-nuclear nations face is the psychological difficulty of comprehending the inherent futility of a nuclear arsenal in the face of the strategic realities, and the requirement for political courage to act accordingly."

52. Those governments which have comprehended this have the duty in the face of the strategic realities to help others, especially those countries which have the scientific and industrial potential to produce nuclear weapons, to comprehend the inherent futility of keeping the nuclear option open. One of the most persuasive ways of doing this would be by the example of the members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, which are likely to be regarded as better informed on these matters. Therefore the early signature and ratification of the non-proliferation Treaty by all members of this Committee would provide the greatest impetus towards nuclear sanity throughout the world.

(The Chairman, Canada)

53. The Canadian Government attaches great importance to the early coming into effect of the non-proliferation Treaty. This is not only because of the importance of the agreement itself but also as the prelude to further progress in controlling and limiting armaments. Indeed, the Treaty, as we have been reminded today and at our first meeting, on Tuesday last, contains an obligation to pursue negotiations on other disarmament measures. In the view of the Canadian Government, it is above all in measures to halt the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union that progress is urgently required. One reason is that without such action by the super-Powers the non-proliferation Treaty will not long remain effective, as the representative of Mexico reminded us at our first meeting (ENDC/PV.395, para.46). But we would also argue that, if the competitive building up of a nuclear arsenal is inherently futile -- and we agree with Mr. McNamara that it is --, the elaboration and enlargement and further sophistication of such arsenals are even more futile.

54. The Canadian Government has repeatedly made clear its view that the sooner negotiations to limit the deployment of nuclear missiles can be started, the better. We were glad to note from the statements of the co-Chairmen that there is an intention to pursue these talks soon. We look forward to an early announcement by our co-Chairmen that the steps to start the negotiations have been taken. We look forward to such an announcement not only because action to limit the deployment of nuclear missiles is in the interests of Canada as well as of the nuclear-weapon States, and indeed of the whole world, but also because we believe that even a beginning in this field will enable progress to be made on other disarmament measures.

55. In particular it is our hope that, with some prospect of reaching agreement in respect of nuclear missiles, the requirement for testing new designs of nuclear warheads would be reduced, and that the negotiation of a treaty to supplement and complete the partial test-ban Treaty (ENDC/100/Rev.1) might become easier. In our view the achievement of a comprehensive test ban would be a very important step indeed along the disarmament road, not least because it offers a most promising means of putting an end to the qualitative nuclear arms race by its potential value as a means of verifying an eventual agreement on this subject. The Canadian delegation is well aware that delegations here attach high priority to the comprehensive test ban; and we look forward to the continuation and intensification of exchanges of view on this subject, to which my delegation hopes to contribute.

(The Chairman, Canada)

56. It appears to us that the nuclear-weapon States would be demonstrating their intention to carry out their obligations under article VI of the non-proliferation Treaty if the United States and the Soviet Union were to embark on missile talks and to provide constructive contributions to the discussion of a comprehensive test ban. Also close to the root of the matter of ending the nuclear arms race would be a cut-off of the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. An agreement on the cut-off would, in our view, be a vital step forward in the process of strategic arms limitations; and we look forward to the groundwork for it being prepared here in the Committee.

57. While we seriously dispute the argument that the absence of provisions relating to the arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States is a sound reason for refusing to sign the non-proliferation Treaty -- and indeed we reject such arguments as shortsighted and lacking in realism --, we fully subscribe to the view that the nuclear-weapon States must seek and find ways to go about dismantling their nuclear arsenals. We see a clear connexion between the missile talks, the comprehensive test ban and the cut-off, and between progress in those three fields and the whole process of reinforcement of the non-proliferation Treaty. We accordingly attach high priority to the discussion of the comprehensive test ban and the cut-off; and we hope that conditions will so develop that consideration can usefully be given to the terms in which agreements might be drawn.

58. It will be apparent, then, that in the view of the Canadian delegation it is appropriate to accord the highest priority to measures of nuclear disarmament. It is in this field that the greatest dangers of ultimate catastrophe lie. Moreover, if we can make sufficient progress in the direction of bringing about the reduction of nuclear armaments, it would appear from their public statements regarding disarmament negotiations that the other two nuclear-weapon States, which do not sit in this Committee, might be persuaded to take part in the discussions. In particular, we hope that without further delay France will take its place as a member of this Committee and resume the exercise of that valuable and constructive influence which French delegations in the past have exercised. The question of China is inherently more difficult, but at some stage -- and reason argues that this should not be too far in the future -- the Committee must consider also how China can become associated with the disarmament negotiations.

(The Chairman, Canada)

59. It is particularly urgent and important that the other two nuclear Powers become involved. We think, however, that any expansion should be governed by the need to retain the character of the Committee as a negotiating body, while providing equitable representation of those countries most capable of contributing to arms-control discussions.

60. The agenda adopted by the Committee on 15 August of last year (ENDC/236), while giving priority to measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race, includes certain other measures affecting nuclear weapons, notably the cessation of the manufacture of such weapons and the reduction and subsequent elimination of nuclear stockpiles. While these measures are devoutly to be desired, it seems to the Canadian delegation that the practical course is to move towards them by means of agreements on the comprehensive test ban and the cut-off.

61. Regarding other items on our agenda, we welcome the prospects for progress on an agreement which would have as its principal aim to reserve for peaceful purposes the use of as large an area as possible of the deep ocean floor. In that connexion we noted with interest the draft treaty proposed by the representative of the Soviet Union on prohibition of the use for military purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof (ENDC/240); and we are studying it. We have also noted the comments of the representative of the United States and his Government's readiness for full discussion of this question. These are encouraging signs that the co-Chairmen intend to come to grips with this problem; although, as we are all aware, there are differences of opinion concerning the nature and extent of prohibitions under an agreement to reserve the sea-bed and deep ocean exclusively for peaceful purposes. But, notwithstanding these difficulties, we are confident that discussions at this session of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament will narrow the differences and lead to real progress towards an agreement on this vital subject.

62. In fact, the high priority which the co-Chairmen are giving to the sea-bed would seem to indicate that they propose in effect that consideration of this measure should come next on the list of priorities for our agenda. If this understanding were to prove correct -- and it has always been Canadian policy to press ahead with any subject which holds out the promise of progress -- we would only say at this stage that consideration of this item should not in any way pre-empt or prevent parallel discussion of items connected with the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, and particularly a comprehensive test ban.

(The Chairman, Canada)

63. The other item specifically on our agenda which appears to offer promise of forward movement is the question of chemical and biological warfare. It was a source of satisfaction to the Canadian delegation that we were able to work out with the Polish delegation in New York the terms of a mutually-acceptable draft resolution which later enjoyed wide sponsorship and was adopted almost unanimously by the General Assembly (resolution 2454 A (XXIII)), and which requested the Secretary-General to appoint a group of experts to study and report on the effects of the possible use of chemical and bacteriological warfare. The Canadian Government was pleased to be able to respond to the Secretary-General's request that a Canadian scientist be a member of the group of experts.

64. As several members of this Committee will be aware because their governments also nominated members of the group, the organizational meeting went off successfully in January here in Geneva. We are confident that the experts will soon provide us with a document which will illuminate our discussions. Meanwhile, however, we see no reason why the Committee should not proceed with exchanges of views, as suggested by the representative of the United Kingdom today, as well as with clarifications of positions and terminology, in particular with respect to the working paper (ENDC/232) submitted last August by the United Kingdom delegation.

65. As the representative of Mexico so pertinently reminded us (ENDC/PV.395, para.31), many urgent matters have been more or less neglected in the recent past because of the Committee's concentration on and preoccupation with the non-proliferation Treaty. In our view, however, the non-proliferation Treaty provides a foundation on which to base further agreements in several areas. In my statement today I have suggested a number of areas in which it seems to my delegation that there are possibilities of having profitable exchanges of views which would help in developing such agreements. It is my intention to set out more fully in the course of this session of the Committee the Canadian position with regard to the details of these matters.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 396th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador G. Ignatieff, representative of Canada.

"Statements were made by the representatives of Nigeria, the United Kingdom and Canada.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 25 March 1969, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.